

## GETTING BRITAIN'S RAILWAYS BACK ON TRACK

Exclusive interview with  
Transport Secretary  
Lilian Greenwood

**MICK WHELAN:** Why it's time  
to move to direct debit

**ALASTAIR KRISTOFFERSEN:**  
A Ghost of Christmas Past

**SIMON WELLER:** How DBS  
let our drivers down



**railway** enginemen's **tax free saver** plans

**for the cost of a fish  
& chip supper, you can  
look after your future...**

tax free policies from £5 per week

products

- **saver plan**
- **children's  
saver plan**
- **saver and  
disability plan**



for further information call us  
on **freephone 0800 328 9140**

visit our website at  
**[www.enginemens.co.uk](http://www.enginemens.co.uk)**

or write to us at Railway Enginemen's Assurance Society Limited,  
727 Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham, B8 2LE



**railway** enginemen's  
assurance society

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority  
Incorporated under the Friendly Societies Act 1992





Mick at the TUC lobby against the Tories' TU Bill

## Rising to meet the challenge head on

**R**ECENT events in Paris, and the TGV test train crash, naturally bring to mind safety and security in the 21st century during mass transit with ordinary people going about their business. On behalf of us all we have extended our condolences, and our thoughts are with the families and friends of all those affected.

One of our recurring themes in the last year on all sectors of the railway has been to state the case that, for the travelling public, and those of us engaged in the delivery of services, we need a visible presence everywhere, particularly in currently recognised safety critical roles, and any effort to lessen these essential protections, and the vigilance that goes with them, will be aggressively resisted.

I read with interest about the DfT reducing its budget by 30% in the next four years. We already have a reduction in the Network Rail budget, in real terms, on top of the head of Network Rail admitting to the Transport Select Committee that they have not costed major projects, such as electrification, properly. We must ensure we do not once more end up with a degraded infrastructure that imports risk whilst being pressurised to deliver services on a performance or penalty based system.

We have faced numerous challenges in the past 12 months, all driven by political will, and decisions from the Caledonian sleepers to the impact of the tax on coal, the attempted forced imposition of the Night Tube and now the impact of the government's failure to protect the steel industry and, with your help and support, we will continue to meet these head on.

The passing of the Trade Union Bill, even with minor changes, means we have a greater fight on our hands to challenge it in the House of Lords or decide what we are willing to do in relation to bad law. The president of another trade union said, 'If my general secretary has to go to prison, so be it.' Hopefully, we are not at that stage, yet.

ASLEF continues to grow and our voice is being heard in the right places doing what we should be doing – fighting for and protecting what we have, and our futures. That happens because of the unity and solidarity you give and show. Thank you!

On behalf of the head office staff, officers, and executive committee, may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a wonderful Christmas and a bright, safe and prosperous New Year!

Yours fraternally

**Mick Whelan**, general secretary



4



8

## News

- ASLEF in action on the TU Bill at Westminster 4
- Alison Miller at the Women's Labour Party conference in Brighton 5
- Paul Patmore at the STUC black workers' conference in Glasgow 6
- Elizabeth Cocks at the Anne Frank House 7
- Alan Moss: D3's safety seminar in Liverpool 8



10

## Features

- Simon Weller: How DBS let drivers down 10
- Mick Whelan: Time to move to direct debit 11
- Exclusive interview: Lilian Greenwood on getting Britain's railways back on track 12-13
- Mick Holder walks round Walthamstow 14
- Christmas Story: A Ghost of Christmas Past by Alastair Kristoffersen 15

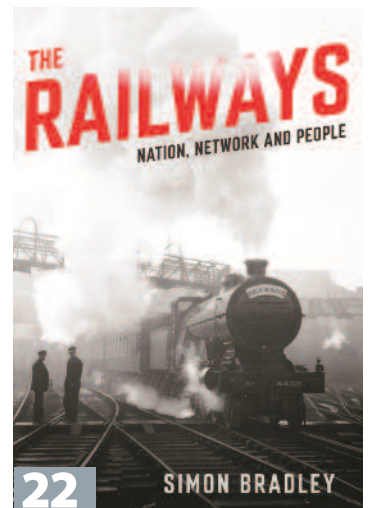


12-13

## Regulars

- Branch News and 100 Years of Union 16-17
- Obituaries 18-19
- Letters and Classified Advertisements 20-21
- Last Word: Books for Christmas 22
- Prize Crossword and Legal Services 23

Cover photograph: Andrew Wiard



22

The **ASLEF** Journal is published every month by:

ASLEF, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN Tel: 020 7324 2400

email: [journal@aslef.org.uk](mailto:journal@aslef.org.uk) website: [www.aslef.org.uk](http://www.aslef.org.uk)

**EDITOR** Mick Whelan | **DESIGNER** Michael Cronin | **PRINTER** TU Ink, 107 Fleet Street, London, EC4A 2AB  
**ADVERTISING** Ten Alps, Portland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5BH. Contact Edwin Rodrigues on 0207 657 1819 or [edwin.rodrigues@tenalps.com](mailto:edwin.rodrigues@tenalps.com) | **CLASSIFIED ADS** [journal@aslef.org.uk](mailto:journal@aslef.org.uk) or call 020 7324 2400  
The acceptance of an advert does not necessarily imply endorsement of that product or service by ASLEF  
**CHANGE OF ADDRESS** Please post your details to ASLEF, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN



# Cameron's variant of the Gulliver concept

**A** SLEF activists showed just why the train drivers' trade union punches well above its weight with a terrific turnout at the TUC's lobby of Parliament against the Tories' Trade Union Bill last month.

Mick Whelan, ASLEF's general secretary, who is also vice-chair of TULO, the influential Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation, and Simon Weller, our national organiser, who also sits on the general council of the TUC, and the TUC's executive committee, had called for a good turnout to demonstrate against 'the biggest attack on trade unions in decades.'

And we got it. More than 100 members – including Hussein Ezzedine of Edinburgh No 1, Ryan Howe of Exeter, and Sean Gordon, Ian Jordan and James Glew of Buxton – turned up at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster – a remarkable turnout for a union with 18,830 members. Jo Stevens, the newly-elected Labour MP for Cardiff Central, who described the



Bill as 'illiterate, illiberal and illegal' in an article in the *Journal* in October joined us, while Neil Findlay, Labour MSP for Lothian, stood shoulder to shoulder with Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF's organiser in Scotland, at Holyrood.

We have also submitted our evidence to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee, saying it is hypocritical of the Conservative government to reduce red tape for business while strangling trade unions with unnecessary regulation.

'It's a variant of the Gulliver concept,' said Mick. 'That's how the chairman of the National Coal Board described the Thatcher government's legal strategy during the miners' strike of 1984-85. It was designed, he said, to encourage multiple legal actions, each one "tying another tiny legal



ASLEF activists at Westminster were joined by Jo Stevens (below left) and at Holyrood by Neil Findlay (below) while Mick shows solidarity with Steve Turner of Unite and Pete Pinkney of the RMT (left)



rope around the union until it woke one day and couldn't move."

'That's what they're trying to do to us. We represent ordinary, decent, hard-working men and women, doing a safety-critical job to ensure passengers get the first class public transport service they deserve, and this Bill is designed to make things worse for every one of us.'

## QUOTE...

*'What matters above all else is that, as Brian Eno put it during the leadership contest, the conversation changes. In this, Mr Corbyn is already successful: he has certainly changed the conversation at Westminster.'* – New Statesman

...UNQUOTE



Pack up your troubles in an ASLEF executive rucksack for

just £14 (inc p&p); email [admin@aslef.org.uk](mailto:admin@aslef.org.uk) or visit our online shop at [www.aslef.org.uk](http://www.aslef.org.uk)

## TWEETS OF THE MONTH



*Just watched black people carrier drive over Vauxhall Bridge on a double cycle way separated by concrete lip from the road. Extraordinary.*

Kevin Maguire



*Complaints to advert watchdog over GWR claim to give West its railway back when First still owns it.*

We Own It



*Our democracy. Under attack. Stop the TU Bill.*

Unions Together

## OLD ROLLING STOCK HITS 14 YEAR HIGH

The average age of UK rolling stock has risen to 20.2 years, an increase of 0.8 years in the last 12 months, and the highest for 14 years, according to the Office of Rail and Road. London Overground is the operator with the newest fleet (4.7 years on average) followed by TPE (7.7) and Virgin West Coast (10.4) while Merseyrail (36.3 years), Great Western (32.4) and Virgin East Coast (29.3) have the oldest fleets.

## THE THINGS THEY SAY

Tracey Crouch, Conservative MP for Chatham & Aylesford, says her poorer constituents in Kent are going to have to learn to go without. The Minister for Sport suggested people on tax credits should not be splashing out on satellite TV. 'You have to sometimes go without things like paid subscriptions to television channels to make ends meet.' Labour MPs say she doesn't understand the financial pressures hard-working families face in the Tories' Age of Austerity.



ASLEF is not sending any Christmas cards this year; instead we are making a donation to charity.

# I am woman watch me grow

**ALISON MILLER**, WRC rep District 2, reports on the Women's Labour Party conference held in Brighton

**T**HE Women's Labour Party conference in Brighton in September was attended by dozens of enthusiastic new members. Expectations were high, and the renewed hope in the party, after the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader, was reflected in the lively debates.

Kate Green, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, welcomed us to conference. Then Yvette Cooper paid tribute to Harriet Harman, reminding everyone how Harriet had

this conference reinstated on the calendar five years ago. Yvette said more women joined Labour in one month – July – than there are in the Conservative Party – showing Labour is the place for women.

Harriet, introducing an open mic debate on the way forward, said we need to offer a helping hand to other women so 'We can change the world together.'

Kezia Dugdale, leader of the Scottish Labour Party, addressed conference in the afternoon. She said the key to equality is having feminists in positions of power where our voices will be heard.

Jeremy Corbyn followed Kezia and was given a standing ovation. He admitted he had made mistakes but it was often women members of the party who pointed these out and suggested new ways of doing things. He wants to work with women, the party and the NEC to improve the representation of women across the whole party.



**Blues Sisters In their shades:** Debbie Reay and Collette Gibson (standing); Alison Miller and Julie Clegg (sitting)

**500 CLUB:** District Council 7, with number 186, won the December draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £360.

## Off the rails



**SIMON HEFFER**, a right-wing newspaper columnist with whom we rarely agree, takes George Osborne to task in the *Sunday Telegraph* for his plans to 'build more affordable housing in villages' that people living in the countryside 'do not want changed out of recognition.' What the Chancellor should do, says Simon, 'is re-open railways Beeching closed 50 years ago in areas that are now packed with people clogging up the inadequate roads driving miles to stations, shops and schools.' For once the man is bang on the money!



**STELLA CREASY**, Labour MP for Walthamstow, deputy leadership candidate, and nemesis of the 'legal loan shark' company Wonga, has a nice dry wit, too. One abusive Twitter troll got the swift rejoinder, 'That's dumb Dr Blonde Bitch to you, actually.' Because after Colchester High School and Magdalene College, Cambridge, Stella got a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science.



**DAVE BRAILSFORD**, manager of Team Sky, and Britain's Olympic cycling coach, tells the tale of when, at the Manchester Velodrome, he asked Man Utd manager Alex Ferguson for tips on success in management. Without pausing, or blinking, says Dave, Fergie told him: 'Get rid of all the \*\*\*\*\*.'



**DICK TUCK**, a Democrat, and political prankster, was asked for his reaction after standing, and losing, an election for the California state senate in 1966. He uttered the immortal line: 'The people have spoken... the bastards!' That's politics, and that's democracy, as the Blairites now know.



**LEN McCLUSKEY**, general secretary of Unite, sent EC president Tosh McDonald this image, captured on his iPhone, with the message: 'Typical McDonald. Not listening ha ha. Len Mc.' Happy Christmas!

**CONFERENCES 2016:** The **Scottish TUC** is at the Caird Hall in Dundee from Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 April. ASLEF's **annual assembly of delegates** is at the Macdonald Highlands hotel, Aviemore, from Monday 9 to Friday 13 May. The **Tolpuddle Martyrs' festival**, near Dorchester, is from Friday 15 to Sunday 17 July. The **Trades Union Congress** is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 11 to Wednesday 14 September. The **Labour Party conference** is at the BT convention centre in Liverpool from Sunday 25 to Wednesday 28 September.

# ASLEF

Tel: 020 7324 2400  
Fax: 020 7490 8697  
email: [info@aslef.org.uk](mailto:info@aslef.org.uk)

## Moving to direct debit

The government intends to abolish check off across all public sector organisations as part of its Trade Union Bill and plans to cut 'the public cost of facility time.' ASLEF needs to prepare for this across our membership. Members on check off are therefore being encouraged to move to direct debit in order to ensure the union remains financially independent in the future.

### Key points

- The trade union movement is under attack from a government determined to destroy us. Moving from check off to direct debit will help us defend ourselves against this threat and to remain a strong and independent union by protecting our income stream.
- Many train operating companies charge us to provide check off facilities. Moving to direct debit will save us money.
- More members on direct debit helps us to better represent, organise and campaign for all our members.

**ASLEF** the train drivers' union

77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN





# I am woman hear me roar

**ALISON MILLER reports on the Scottish TUC women's conference in Dundee**

THE 88th annual STUC women's conference in Dundee was dominated by motions on low pay, welfare cuts, zero hours contracts, the gender pay gap and our work-life balance, because women in Scotland are being disproportionately disadvantaged in the workplace by Conservative cuts and the David Cameron-George Osborne Age of Austerity.

Johann Lamont,

MSP for Glasgow Pollok, gave an excellent speech in which she praised the three main political parties in Scotland for all having women leaders, but warned that this does not mean women are yet equal in Scottish politics. She said women's voices must not only be heard but also be answered.

The ASLEF motion 'Make female genital mutilation reporting mandatory' was seconded by the Fire Brigades Union and



**Susan Morrison sent everyone home from Dundee with a smile on their face**

well received. ASLEF seconded an RMT motion calling for more active recruitment of women into trade unions.

Conference closed with a vote of thanks given by Susan Morrison, a long standing activist and Scottish comedian, ensuring everyone left with a smile!

## These people need our help

**PAUL PATMORE reports on the STUC black workers' conference**

The 19th annual STUC black workers' conference was held under the banner 'No to Racism, No to Intolerance' at the Hallmark Hotel in Glasgow in October. The chair was Rakiya Suleiman of Unison.

Dave Moxham, STUC deputy general secretary, spoke about the industrial disputes of the 1970s, especially the miners and the strikes at Ford and when the lights went out. He also spoke against the use of agency staff to break strikes. We had guest speakers from all the major political parties and motions from people of all ethnic backgrounds. Unfortunately, supporting

speakers did not reflect this.

ASLEF's motion to conference was on the refugee crisis. The conflict in Syria has resulted in the biggest mass movement of people since the Second World War. These people need our help. There are people held in camps on Syria's borders who have fled their homes because of the violence and threat to life. The British government has been slow to act but conference commended the Scottish government for committing to welcome 1,000 refugees to Scotland and called on the Scottish government to see that all help is afforded them.

Paul Patmore (District 2) will be serving as a member of the STUC black workers' committee for another year.

**EC1 Marz Colombini models ASLEF's Kes tee-shirt – offering a Harvey Smith salute to the Tories' TU Bill – based on the iconic image from the Ken Loach film, and the Penguin paperback edition of the original novel by Barry Hines. Price £10 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk**



### OXFORD LINK

A new £320 million rail link between Oxford and London has opened in a deal between Chiltern Railways and Network Rail. Two new stations, Bicester Village and Oxford Parkway, will take passengers to Marylebone.

### 10 PEOPLE CHASING EVERY JOB

ScotRail has had 10,000 applications for 100 train drivers' jobs. 'I'm delighted so many people have applied,' said Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF's organiser in Scotland. 'As a union, we welcome the development of Scotland's railway and look forward to representing the successful candidates.'

### BOOST FOR BOMBARDIER

Porterbrook has placed a £100 million order for a fleet of 80 Class 387 Electrostar locomotives with Bombardier in Derby.

### QUOTE...

*'Jeremy Corbyn's victory in the leadership election was the first time many of our young readers felt anything like relevance to, let alone empowerment within, a political system that has alienated them completely.'* – Ed Vulliamy in *The Observer*

**...UNQUOTE**



**Celebrate 15 years of Equality for All at ASLEF with our striking new badge. £3 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk**



# ASLEF

77 St John Street, London EC1M 4NN  
T: 020 7324 2400 F: 020 7490 8697 E: info@aslef.org.uk

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY Direct Debit

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen  
77 St John Street  
London EC1M 4NN



NAME(S) OF ACCOUNT HOLDER(S):

ORIGINATOR'S ID NUMBER:

9 7 4 0 7 6

BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY ACCOUNT NUMBER:

REFERENCE NO: (National Insurance No)

BRANCH SORT CODE:

(Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of accounts)

NAME/ADDRESS OF YOUR BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY:

TO THE MANAGER OF

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society:**

Please pay (ASLEF) Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

I understand that this instruction may remain with (ASLEF) and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

SIGNATURES: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

#### The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit ASLEF will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request ASLEF to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by ASLEF or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when ASLEF asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.



# Tulips and memories from Amsterdam

**ELIZABETH COCKS, district 6 council secretary, reports on a visit to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam**

At the end of October, District 6, following a previous educational visit to Kraków, in Poland, went to the Anne Frank Museum in Amsterdam – a trip open to all members in our district and almost half our branches were represented.

It's amazing to see the queues for a little girl whose private journal provides such poignant first hand evidence against the Nazis in the Netherlands. The museum transports you to a place even the most vivid imagination would struggle to reach; climbing the steep stairs, looking at the artefacts, and behind the original

bookcase, takes you back to the 1940s. Seeing her actual script hit it home harder than anything; she felt real, almost standing next to me, as I looked at those pages. What is so amazing is the attention to detail of the interviews translated on screen, weaving in new technology, without taking anything away from the ambience.

We also went to the Verzetsmuseum, dedicated to the Dutch Resistance, on the other side of Amsterdam. After the crowds at the Anne Frank Museum, this was more subdued, almost the forgotten family member. But the content is amazing. There were many strikes in 1941 and the Nazis, taken by surprise, began shooting the strikers. In September 1944 –



**Train crew ready to rock (above) and waiting for the man on Prinsengracht**

ahead of the landings at Arnhem – the Dutch government in exile called a railway strike. It was a success but forced 30,000 railway workers into hiding, with help from London.

Towards the end of the Anne Frank Museum there is video of various famous people talking about what she means to them; one that particularly resounded with us was Emma Thompson saying, of Anne, 'All her would-haves are our opportunities.'



## Cars on the line

**MICK HOLDER of ASLEF's health & safety department on the risk to life and limb from vehicle incursions**

Recent events have highlighted an issue which everyone in rail is aware of and reviewing the statistics shows there is room for preventative action – vehicle incursion risks, or road vehicles ending up on the permanent way.

In October a car crashed through a fence near Wythall station in Worcestershire. It tumbled down an embankment, ended up beside the track, and an oncoming train stopped just short of the vehicle. No one was injured and a 20-year-old has been charged with driving under the influence of alcohol.

A week later a moving ScotRail passenger train carrying 140 passengers struck a vehicle near Uphall station in West Lothian. One passenger suffered minor injuries. These incidents shed a little light on statistics presented at a recent TORG safety system risk group meeting.

Following the fatal incursion incident at Great Heck in 2001 the DfT commissioned a programme of work to identify sites where the potential for vehicle incursion existed and measures to mitigate against the risk should be implemented.

As of 2014, 10,369 sites had been identified; 1,178 of these are defined as high risk; 24% of these still require mitigation; and 66 sites remain defined as very high risk. A large proportion of the work to mitigate against incursions is on sites owned by local authorities, with funding for improvements

proving to be problematical, leading to the ORR challenging some of the less engaged local authorities, who have since (reportedly) increased their commitment to the programme.

Sites graded as high risk or where line speed reaches 90mph are to have risk assessments completed by 31 March 2016. For all other sites, risk assessment is to be completed by December next year.



**Stay dry and warm this winter with our smart new black waterproof jacket. Price £30 (inc p&p); email [admin@aslef.org.uk](mailto:admin@aslef.org.uk) or visit our online shop at [www.aslef.org.uk](http://www.aslef.org.uk)**



**The public transport benevolent fund**

## All about people, people in the public transport industry, people like you...

A wide range of financial, health and welfare benefits available to all those working in the public transport industry. Just £1 a week covers you, your partner and dependent children.



0300 333 2000 [www.tbf.org.uk](http://www.tbf.org.uk) [help@tbf.org.uk](mailto:help@tbf.org.uk)

Transport Benevolent Fund CIO, known as TBF, is a registered charity in England and Wales, 1160901



# Committed to the cause

**ALAN MOSS of Longsight branch reports on District 3's health & safety seminar in Liverpool**

**T**HE annual District 3 safety seminar in Liverpool, now firmly embedded in the health & safety calendar, delivers training to reps both experienced and recently elected. To see months of planning come to fruition is extremely rewarding and to see those gathered gain confidence, and increase their ability, makes it all worthwhile.

Our GS Mick Whelan once again opened our seminar and set the scene for the rest of the day; his talk was exceptionally well received and covered subjects such as open access operators, Network Rail, and one topic that would be prevalent throughout the day, the draconian Trade Union Bill.

Education is vital for our reps to carry out their roles; my education from ASLEF and the TUC has been the catalyst in empowering me in my role. Bob Kelly of the TUC education unit in Liverpool urged reps to attend courses and spoke eloquently about what is on offer and what the courses entail.

I delivered the first of the workshops, on using SRSC regulations in the right manner and ensuring employers are aware of, and work in conjunction with you to adhere to, the regs. I also spoke about ORR fatigue guidance, the importance of joint working groups, and making your voice and that of our members clearly heard at the highest level.

Following lunch, and purely for fun, we had an h&s quiz, in groups. I'm pleased to say it was full marks all round! Our EC member Andy Hourigan spoke about the work he has been undertaking on the executive committee in relation to health & safety and our friend and comrade Hilda Palmer, one of most vigorous campaigners for h&s I know, talked about the work we have to do to fight the Trade Union Bill and the many other challenges we face. Our District Organiser Colin Smith presented



**District 3 delegates line up for the traditional team picture at D3's safety seminar**

Hilda with a cheque for £100 to help ensure the invaluable work of the Manchester Hazards Centre continues.

The penultimate session was my workshop on how we progress issues, use procedures correctly, and how and when we utilise the services of the Rail Regulator. Last, but by no means least, our DO spoke about the importance of h&s and remaining diligent, pro-active and committed to the cause. Thanks to all the attending delegates who made it such a successful day.

## Frank's on TOp – no thanks to LU

Frank Hoffman, a Tube driver from Loughton on the Central line, has been named train driver of the year at the Rail Staff awards. 'Only problem was that LUL, although they initially supported the scheme, decided not to participate in the ceremony,' said DO8 Finn Brennan. 'But, with local support, our man went anyway and won, as an independent! Lots of ruffled feathers locally as LU are happy to take the kudos at other awards ceremonies.'

Dave Mabbett, h&s rep at Loughton, part of Leytonstone



**Train operator Frank picks up his train driver of the year award**

branch, said: 'Frank joined London Underground in 1989 as a station guard and joined ASLEF the same year. After five years he was promoted to train operator and never looked back. In June, his emergency passenger alarm was

operated. He immediately raised the alarm to the control room, shut down the train and went back. This, on London Underground, is a regular occurrence but, this time, he was confronted with a passenger in cardiac arrest.

'Frank began CPR and carried on until paramedics arrived. They contacted LU to praise Frank's prompt actions which, they said, had saved the passenger's life. Frank was nominated by staff for train driver of the year. Everyone was excited and took the time to vote but then we were informed that all LU staff put forward for awards this year were to have their nominations pulled by LU with no reason as to why. After some detective work we were able to get Frank reinstated but as an independent. I find this strange as LU's website boasts that they have been awarded train operator of the year. We seem to have double standards here and it just goes to show what they think of their staff.'

## ONE EXTRA SEAT FOR EVERY 3,300 NEW PASSENGERS

It is, they say, about supply and demand. Well, the demand is there. But not the supply.

New figures show that while ScotRail's 'passenger volumes' have surged the privatised TOC has provided just one extra seat for every 3,300 additional passenger journeys.

The number of passenger journeys on ScotRail has soared from 68.7 million in 2004-2005 to 92.7 million last year while seating and standing capacity has only been increased from 63,000 to 69,000. The shortage of rolling stock is most acute on the new Borders Railway, with passengers complaining about being crammed into two carriage trains.

Ken Sutherland of Railfuture says passengers in Scotland are suffering from a 'legacy of neglect.'

### QUOTE...

*'It is sad that DB Schenker (formerly EWS) is to make 118 drivers redundant around the country. Rail services are needed for industry here as much as in Germany.'* – **Peter Wakefield of Railfuture in Railwatch**

**...UNQUOTE**

The First Group/Unite Learning bus called at Exeter St David's to celebrate the union learn campaign. Lecturers from Petroc college of further education were on hand to provide advice and enrol members in distance learning programmes and participants also had the opportunity to take part in photo



sessions with the Jessop photography academy team. 'Well done lead ULR Phil Buxton who was behind the set up,' said

ASLEF Education project worker Emma Penman. 'And to all those who helped make the day a success.'



**Our woolly hat will keep you warm this winter. Price £5 (including p&p); email [admin@aslef.org.uk](mailto:admin@aslef.org.uk) or visit our online shop at [www.aslef.org.uk](http://www.aslef.org.uk)**



# Comprehensive legal cover to keep you and your family on track



THOMPSONS  
SOLICITORS

STANDING UP FOR YOU



**Contact the ASLEF legal service first for free, specialist legal advice and representation on:**

- Personal injury - at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Serious injury - including brain and spinal cord injuries
- Industrial disease or illness
- Reduced rates for conveyancing, probate and lasting Powers of Attorney
- Criminal law support for workplace issues (24hr helpline: 0800 587 7530)
- Employment law (accessed via your ASLEF district organiser)

**ASLEF members' families are also covered for personal injury claims away from work.**

Using your ASLEF legal service, provided by Thompsons Solicitors, means you will keep **100% of your compensation** within the union scheme.

**Call the ASLEF legal service today on 0808 100 8009**



# We're fighting for the future of freight on rail



**SIMON WELLER, ASLEF's national organiser, and our lead officer for DB Schenker, reports on the hard-fought negotiations over the summer to try and save as many of our members' jobs as possible at DBS**

**T**O DESCRIBE the last year or so for DB Schenker as 'turbulent' would be understating it. We have seen the closure of power stations and the collapse of coal traffic in the north following the government's implementation of an increased coal tax. Although it must be noted that this should not have come as a surprise to anyone; we all knew the increase was coming, and what its intended effect was (to reduce the consumption of coal at Britain's power stations). But this has led to significant redundancies and the closure of long-standing depots.

We have also seen the loss of major contracts to competitors and the TUPE transfer pain that follows. The TUPE selection process appears arbitrary and random, and is complicated by competing employers either not wanting to retain drivers or not wishing to take on those attached to the work because they already have surplus drivers for whom they need to find work.

## CONFUSING AND UNHELPFUL

The arguments around who should take whom as part of the transfer spiral off in the direction of the law. Of which there is much precedent on the transfer of workers, a lot of it confusing and unhelpful. The long and the short of it is: if you are attached to the work – 'in scope' – you are guaranteed a job; if you are not, then you are not guaranteed a job. This, in the view of the British judiciary, is 'protection.' If you are in scope and choose not to transfer then you are not redundant, and you are not staying with your previous employer; you have, in the eyes of the law, just dismissed yourself.

Not only that, but we are seeing work transferred from rail to other modes of transport because of unpredictable external events and the oh-so-predictable lack of support for the railway from this government. A case in point is the damage done to rail freight's reliability at the Channel Tunnel. The Calais crisis has resulted in the shifting of some time-sensitive work to ship.

Welcome to the fully privatised freight sector; no guaranteed franchises or management concessions here. Passenger franchises et al are little more than state



**DB Schenker have problems in Britain (above) and also back home in Germany (left)**

contracts run by multinational bus companies. What we see in the freight sector is the pain and heartache that has been the lot of many skilled UK workers for decades. What they went through in the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher's liberalisation and casualisation of markets is now familiar territory for significant numbers of ASLEF members.

What is to be done? In the market system, so entrenched, with workers' rights viewed as 'red tape,' we have little room to manoeuvre but what I will pay tribute to is the hard work of our elected representatives right across the country, from local reps, and company councillors, to district organisers, all trying to find or create jobs for those redundant and displaced ASLEF members.

## CASUALISATION OF MARKETS

We have tried to keep members in the areas in which they live, near to their families and communities – regrettably, not always successfully – but we have not allowed 'the Devil take the hindmost' attitude of some in management to prevail, perhaps cynically hoping they could force drivers from north to south.

There are other ways to create vacancies. The overtime that is constantly worked by having Sundays outside the working week in many areas whilst just across the way there are ASLEF members struggling to find jobs near

them will need to be properly addressed in the near future. A reduction in the average working week to 32 hours, in line with ASLEF policy, looks very attractive but lays bare the unbalanced nature of the freight sector. In the north, despite George Osborne's powerhouse claims, we see contraction and redundancies while, in the south, we see shortages and contracts in danger because of an inability to resource them adequately.

To reduce hours in the south would expose these shortages even further, with potentially disastrous consequences. That is why we are shifting work from the overburdened south northwards to depots with free capacity. It is utterly unacceptable to have rest day working at one depot when that same work, relocated, can prevent redundancies at another.

## MORE DRIVERS' JOBS

The long-term answer must be to find new work for the freight sector and more drivers' posts in the passenger companies for surplus freight drivers.

DBS seems to have started to shake off its torpor and senior management have taken their sales team to task and changed key roles and personnel in an attempt to halt the rot and start to win new, and regain, existing contracts. We shall see if it is too little, too late, or the change we need.

On the other hand, will the German masters decide to start dumping loss-making foreign subsidiaries in an attempt to address the problems back at home in Berlin? We shall see. But, whatever happens, we will continue to fight to protect our members' jobs and livelihoods.



# Time to move to direct debit



**MICK WHELAN, ASLEF's general secretary, and our executive committee have examined the ramifications of the Tories' anti-Trade Union Bill for this union's finances. And come up with a solution to the problem it poses**

**T**HE Trade Union Bill, which is currently making its way through parliament, is an attack on every trade unionist in this country. The measures they want to pass into law will make it much harder for trade unionists to take industrial action, by treating abstentions as votes against, and introducing arbitrary hurdles on turn out. No other elections work this way. It will let agency staff replace striking workers (a ban in place for decades) and union members who want to picket or use social media during industrial action will be subject to draconian new rules designed to make it very easy to inadvertently break the law.

The right to withdraw your labour – the right to not be forced to work for a bad employer on his or her terms – is a fundamental, time-honoured, human right. That's why I'm asking ASLEF members – in this year, especially, when we celebrate 800 years since the sealing of the Magna Carta, the first guarantee of many of our liberties, in 1215 – to write to your MP and raise your concerns. This link takes you to a TUC page which will give your MP's email address and a suggested text: <http://act.goingtowork.org.uk/page/speakout/tubill-3rd-reading>

## FIDDLING AS ROME BURNS

The Conservative Party is a party with a lack of compassion and human decency. While our country grapples with once-in-a-generation challenges and decisions such as our relationship with the European Union, the refugee crisis, and trying to build a sustainable economy, what does the government do? It brings in a Bill which attacks the right to strike. It's akin to Nero fiddling as Rome burns.

This government's policies are based on ideology, not evidence. We have seen, this year, the end of large scale deep coal mining in Britain. The government's refusal to support the coal industry was unfinished business from the Thatcher era. The Tories' anti-Trade Union Bill is the biggest threat to trade unions and our workplace democracy for decades and we can only conclude that this, too, is unfinished business for the Conservative Party.

Professor Keith Ewing and John Hendy QC are spot on when they say the Bill's purpose is 'to crush the remaining powers of trade unions to protect the interests of working-class people.' They add that it will only 'facilitate yet



**ASLEF activists out in force at the TUC-organised lobby of Parliament last month**



further transfers of wealth and income from working-class people to the very rich.'

## ORWELLIAN NEW RULES

British trade unions already operate in one of the most heavily regulated frameworks in the Western world with onerous requirements in terms of administration, legalities and finance. The TU Bill will add significant new burdens, such as new requirements on member participation and voting thresholds in industrial action ballots and Orwellian rules on picketing. The certification officer will get sweeping new powers to investigate the internal affairs of trade unions and instigate action against us.

Actually, I can't help feeling the government may be cutting off its nose off to spite its proverbial face. Because a well-balanced society and economy needs strong trade unions as a force to reduce inequality. Even the IMF concedes that collective bargaining is economically important in terms of increasing wages and the positive effects which derive from that. The Tories, not for the first time, are putting dogma before the good of the country.

I applaud the clear and direct stance that the Labour Party, under new leader Jeremy Corbyn, has taken against this Bill. We remain steadfast in our opposition but recognise that concessions and amendments are an inevitable part of tactics adopted during the

- The trade union movement is under attack from a Conservative government determined to destroy trade unions.
- Moving from check off to direct debit helps ASLEF to defend itself against this threat and to remain a strong and independent trade union by protecting our income stream.
- More ASLEF members on direct debit will help us to help you – to better represent, organise and campaign for all our members.

parliamentary process, particularly given the Conservative majority in the House of Commons.

But we should be under no illusions. This Bill will become an Act of Parliament, in one form or another, and we have to deal with the issues it raises, and try to ameliorate its effects.

## FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

One thing you can do now to help us, to help you, is to fill in the direct debit mandate on pages 5 and 6 of this issue of the *Journal*.

Because the government, as part of its Bill, is going to abolish check off across all public sector organisations and also plans to cut 'the public cost of facility time.' ASLEF needs to prepare for this and that's why we are encouraging members on check off to move to direct debit to ensure that ASLEF remains financially independent in the future.

Please, then, take a minute to fill in the direct debit form. All you have to do is fill it in, and send it to us, and we will do the rest. It will help us to help you as train drivers and members of this trade union, formed in 1880 to look after your predecessors on the railway and still, after 135 years, doing a great job.



# Lilian: Getting Britain's railways back on track

**Lilian Greenwood, the new Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, tells KEITH RICHMOND how she sees the future of rail in this country and about her determination to bring the wheels and the steel back together**

**T**HE appointment, by new Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, of Lilian Greenwood as Shadow Secretary of State for Transport in September was warmly welcomed throughout the railway industry. Partly because she's a first class people person – open, accessible, down to earth, and fun to be with – but mostly because, professionally, she really knows her stuff. And in a world where ministers move from one portfolio to another as policies or party leaders change, and fortunes rise or fall, that is not always the case. Senior figures at the TOCs, FOCs, RoSCos and Network Rail often mutter about government ministers who are 'not across the brief'. Which is why they respect a politician who knows the territory; and Lilian served as Shadow Transport Minister under Maria Eagle, Mary Creagh and Michael Dugher before being promoted to the top job and the shadow cabinet.

She was quick to underline Labour's commitment to public ownership – a key policy in Jeremy's successful campaign to become party leader – and made a very well received keynote speech at the Labour Party conference which spelt out what the next Labour government will do about the fragmented, and failing, railway network in this country.

## WE NEED TO GET A BETTER DEAL

'It's become clear to me, and clear to most people, that our railways are in need of reform,' says Lilian over a cappuccino at Nottingham railway station. 'There's been a huge growth in passenger numbers, the result of record investment by the last Labour government, and one thing we can welcome from the coalition, and this current government, is continued investment.'

'But we need to get a much better deal from the money we put in. We're putting in more – £4 billion net a year – so how do we get the best value? Rail fares have gone up 25% since 2010,

with some commuters paying 35% more, and they expect us, when money is tight, to ensure we are using that money well. But the system is not delivering – McNulty found that Britain's railways are 40% less efficient than other European railways – and fragmentation means overcomplicated ticketing arrangements, and new developments such as part time season tickets, take so long to get in position.'

Whenever public ownership is mentioned, as sure as night follows day, some right-wing newspaper columnist, free market think tank blogger or TOC chief executive will mutter something rude about British Rail sandwiches.

## WE'RE DETERMINED TO DELIVER

'We are not in the business of going back to British Rail. We have to look at the successful operation of East Coast because that was something of a game changer. It showed that a public sector operator could succeed, and that public can and does have a place in the railway.' East Coast returned £1 billion to the Treasury and the taxpayer – money that could be spent reducing fares, investing in rail infrastructure, or improving hospitals and schools, rather than disappearing in the form of private profits and shareholder dividends – in the five years it was in the public sector. 'That was so frustrating, and angered so many people, including everyone working for East Coast, and it was for purely ideological, not practical, reasons that the Tories pressed ahead with the privatisation of East Coast.'

'That's the context. As for the how, the principle is to bring the franchises back in as they expire, so it's not a costly exercise, and gradually we end up with a publicly controlled railway.' That is, as poll after poll reveals, a very popular policy with voters right across the political spectrum. Tories, who are not usually in favour of public ownership, are nonetheless fed up with paying £1,000 over the odds on a £5,000 annual season ticket to commute in from Kent to the capital to get to work.

'Passengers are paying a lot of money to ride on the railways – £5,000 for a season ticket is a lot, so where's the money going and is it being used in the most effective way? – because the experience is not as good as it should be. £183 million is going out in dividends to shareholders



each year. The money we are losing from the railway because of privatisation is money that could pay for new carriages, better services, a fares freeze, or to make a payment to the Treasury like the East Coast. It isn't being ideological, it's a practical pursuit. Even Conservative voters can see that.

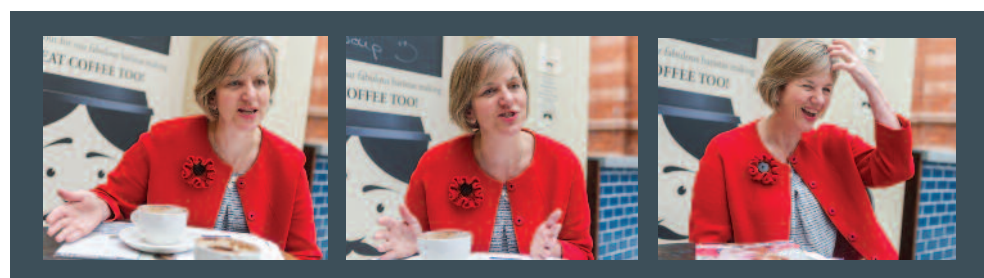
'We rely on our railways to get to school, college and work. We want a fair deal and that's what we're determined to deliver.'

## MOVE FREIGHT OFF ROAD ONTO RAIL

So would a Labour government use a break clause in the contract to expedite the process? 'We would use a break clause, if it's appropriate, and a good deal for farepayers and taxpayers.' The party has time to hammer out the details before it goes to the electorate in 2020. 'We are setting up a Labour task force looking at the detail of implementing the policy, to link with the changing agenda, and devolution, making sure services are closer to communities and our plans meet their needs. One of the national challenges is falling passenger satisfaction.'

'Another is freight where there are real challenges. People tend to focus on passenger routes, and freight takes a back seat, but that's one of the things we need to address in any reform. Because there is the potential to move freight off the road and onto the railway and help our wider objectives in tackling climate change, it plays into that.'

While there are no plans to bring freight back into public ownership – 'passenger operators don't put capital investment into the railway, but







**Lilian at the NET tramway stop above Nottingham railway station (above) and talking to the *Journal* over a coffee (left)**

Photographs by Andrew Wiard

models of buying rolling stock. TfL, for Crossrail, and Merseyrail are securing their own rolling stock because they know, long-term, their rolling stock will be used to provide the services. Here in the East Midlands, at the centre of the rail manufacturing and engineering industry, we are very proud of talking about our 175 year history, and the cluster of world-class firms we have here, and we would be crazy if we don't link our aspirations for high quality engineering with the manufacturing base we have.'

### NOT CLEAR WHAT THE RDG IS FOR

Lilian is committed to HS2 – 'we welcome investment in the railway, we need to build a 21st century infrastructure to revolutionise the links between our cities, and let's make sure we run it under public ownership' – is not overly bothered about the European Union's 4th Railway Package – 'We're some way off a final package, but we have made it clear that we wouldn't want to be unnecessarily constrained by European legislation – but under a Labour government the Rail Delivery Group might not have long to live. I know what ATOC is for, but it is not clear what the RDG is for. The railway needs a guiding mind, a strategic view, but I am not convinced the RDG is the right body for that.'

Lilian is good on the doorstep because she behaves, and talks, like a human being and those she meets in the street are quick to warm to her. 'I never set out to be a politician, but at a very early age I had a sense of "we can do better than this" and then thought about how do you make it better. That's why I got involved in the trade union movement. It's been little steps. But the opportunity to make a difference to individuals, the constituency case work, to do a good job representing people, to feel they have a voice, pursuing issues, and making a difference, gives me a real buzz.'

There are lots of people hoping Lilian gets a chance to make a difference to all of us as the next Secretary of State for Transport in the next Labour government.

the freight operators are taking a risk' – Lilian is determined to keep Network Rail in the public sector.

'It would be a drive to disaster if they went ahead with privatisation. Do they not know their history? And what a disaster Railtrack was?' The Hatfield rail crash in 2000 exposed the serious shortcomings of the privatised infrastructure company. A subsequent inquiry revealed that the company – which put profit before safety – had failed in its duty of care to passengers and workers. 'There were things that the last Labour government could have done and should have done, but turning a dangerous railway into a safe railway was a really important achievement. We tackled that safety crisis. It would be astonishing if this Conservative government were to try to put that achievement – and safety record – at risk.'

### LONG TERM PLAN – ROLLING STOCK

The task force will also examine the role of the rolling stock companies – Angel Trains, Eversholt and Porterbrook – which were bought by senior managers for a song when British Rail was privatised by the Conservative government in the 1990s. The cosy deals done by the companies, which lease rolling stock to TOCs and FOCs, have been likened by critics to the squalid deals struck in Russia after the collapse of communism, when state-owned utilities fell into private hands – and made a few people exceedingly rich – overnight.

'The RoSCos are a legacy of the botched privatisation, and we saw the impact in the West

Coast franchise fiasco, a succession of short-term awards, and the impact on rolling stock matters, such as a slowdown on ordering new stock, and the way some of the best TPE stock was transferred to Chiltern, with the DfT refusing to lift a finger. We need long-term planning for rolling stock. Leaving it to the market, as the DfT says it does, doesn't lead to good outcomes.

'One of the things to look at are different

### FACT FILE



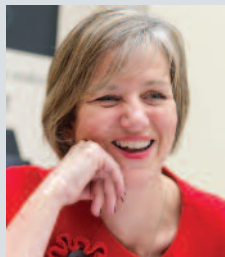
■ **LILIAN GREENWOOD** was born in Bolton in 1966 and brought up in the Lancashire town. She went to Canon Slade School at Bradshaw Brow, Bolton, a comprehensive on the edge of the West Pennine Moors, whose alumni include Maxine Peake, Mark Charnock, Sara Cox, and Simon Aldred of Cherry Ghost.

■ She read Economics, Social & Political Science at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

■ Lilian worked for trade unions – in the CPSA research department (1988-1992) and as a regional organiser for Unison in Nottingham (1992-2010) – before standing for Parliament.

■ She was elected as MP for Nottingham South in 2010 with a majority of 1,772 over the Conservatives. She was appointed to the Transport Select Committee that year and became an assistant opposition whip. Ed Miliband made her Shadow Minister of Transport in 2011.

■ Lilian retained her seat in May this year with a majority of 6,936. She backed Ed Miliband for leader in 2010 and Andy Burnham in 2015. Jeremy Corbyn appointed her Shadow Secretary of State for Transport in September.



■ Lilian is married to Ravi Subramanian, has three daughters – Patsy, Matilda and Elsie – and lives in Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

# If any would not work then neither should he eat



**MICK HOLDER** learns a few history lessons, and hums a couple of East 17 songs, on a cultural walk around a workhouse in Walthamstow

**V**ESTRY House, a workhouse for the poor of the parish between 1730 and 1831, and later used as a town hall, police station, and local meeting place, is the only 18th century workhouse still open to the public. Above the entrance is a stone that starkly declares: 'If any would not work then neither should he eat' and through the door is a small but interesting museum holding a special exhibition marking its years as a workhouse.

Back in those days Walthamstow was very different to what it is now (one of this country's most eye-catching examples of property-based casino capitalism). In 1730 it was a small parish, in the countryside outside the capital, with farmland and pasture surrounding the local church stretching all the way to the marshes and the River Lea. The wealthy built a number of large houses in the area and, by 1870, it had grown into a small suburb with its own purpose built town hall.

## THE LAST RESORT

The Vestry Committee collected local rates and issued 'outdoor relief' to help the poor stay in their homes. A change in the law, and a change in attitude, about how to help those in need led to the construction of the workhouse, seen as a cheaper alternative.

Everyone over the age of seven was expected to work for their keep although many were too old or infirm. Conditions were harsh; it was the last resort for the unemployed, elderly, sick, pregnant and orphaned – those with nowhere else to go. There were up to 80 residents, half of them children, at any one time. Many who entered the workhouse stayed for the rest of their lives. Clothing was provided with the emphasis on durability rather than comfort and inmates were expected to wear an armband with WP – Walthamstow Poor – but this was not always enforceable as some wouldn't wear it.

Initially everyone worked unpaid but, in 1785, a low daily rate was introduced. Women mainly did domestic work and spun material for sacks, sheets and socks. Men would also maintain the parish farm and roads. Picking oakum from old ropes was a regular unpleasant task. Orphan boys at 14 were sent to be trained in a trade, perhaps as a weaver in Bethnal Green, while girls would go into domestic service.

The Vestry Committee's accounts book



The William Morris Gallery (left); Vestry House (below) and the stone above the entrance (below left)

sheds a little light on cultural diversity in 1775; they paid Widow Warr for 'nursing a black child' with the parents possibly slaves kept by a wealthy family in the area. Some former slaves are recorded as having resided at the workhouse which also functioned as a maternity hospital for unmarried women who had no means of support with records of many babies being born there.

Inmates grew fruit and vegetables in the workhouse garden which also had a piggery. Bread, cheese and butter for breakfast and supper were staples with a hot meal at midday comparable with that of a poor labourer outside. Surprisingly, there was a brew house for 'small beer' but this was mainly because it was safer than drinking the water.

## LAZY AND MORALLY LAX

In the middle of the 19th century some Victorians – the ideological predecessors of George Osborne and Iain Duncan Smith – argued that the poor were lazy, morally lax people who had largely brought their misfortune on themselves, and an even harsher, more industrialised system was introduced. Several small workhouses, including Walthamstow, were shut and a new larger one, the West Ham Union Workhouse in Leytonstone, was opened in 1841.

Vestry House also has on display the 10 commandments from the local socialist Sunday school; an original Victorian police cell; the first British four wheel vehicle with an

internal combustion engine, built by Frederick Bremer; and an exhibit on the first all-British powered flight across Walthamstow marsh in 1909 by the pioneer aviator and aeroplane manufacturer Alliott Verdon Roe, who founded Avro.

## VERY 'EAVY, VERY 'UMBLE

From the museum we walked past the local alms houses erected 'for the use of six decayed tradesmen's widows of this parish and no others' past a 16th century timber-framed house and Victorian post box through St Mary's churchyard to the William Morris Gallery in Lloyd Park.

The socialist artisan lived and worked in Walthamstow from 1848 to 1856 and the family home is now the only public gallery devoted to Morris and his work. The collection comprises more than 10,000 objects and tells the story of the life and work of Morris and his circle in the Arts & Crafts movement who revered the skills of the craftsman and woman above mass production. Holdings include original designs, textiles, wallpapers, furniture, stained glass, ceramics, metalwork, books and paintings.

The final stop on our walking tour was a quick visit to Grade II listed Walthamstow Central Library, with its magnificent wooden staircase, which although not made by Morris or one of his followers was certainly made in the same spirit.

Most local authorities have a local history society, records office or museum and they are, in my ever so 'umble opinion – very 'eavy, very 'umble, Mr 'eep – always worth a look.

■ The Vestry House Museum in Vestry Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 9NH, is open from 10am to 5pm, Wednesday to Sunday. The William Morris Gallery in Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4PP, is also open from 10am to 5pm, Wednesday to Sunday. Admission to both is free. Walthamstow Central Library on the High Street, E17 6RQ, is open from 9am to 7pm, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm on Saturday and 10am to 4pm



# A Ghost of Christmas Past

by **Alastair Kristoffersen**

**T**HE winter Wee Alec turned four was the one his Dad was listenin exclusively to songs about miners. Sung by Merle Travis and Johnny Cash, obviously, but also Townes van Zandt's version of *Nine Pound Hammer*, the Gene Clark version of *Give My Love to Marie* and *Brave Awakening* by Terry Reid. Even better, he had some of this stuff on vinyl! He'd put it on and say, 'Whit d'you make of that wee man!' And Wee Alec would say, 'It's too sad, Dad.' And ask for it to be turned off.

This was also the season that Big Alec tried to get Wee Alec intae the fitba. They went all the way through to Motherwell on the train. Big Alec went on about the Well, the Steelmen, but neither of them had much fun. It was baltic and Big Alec hadn't been to a game in years and didn't recognise any of the Well team, much less the folk around about in the stands. 'That was a load of rubbish. Jeez, ah remember watchin Davie Cooper play...' 'This train takes for ever,' Wee Alec replied, and asked for more sweets. 'Naw, you cannae, you've gone through two bags of chocolate raisins as it is.' Wee Alec watched the trees whizz by and sang a wee song to himself till Big Alec told him to 'Wheesht.' Then he said, 'Wait, keep goin, whit song's that?'

Most days they went on long walks. Wee Alec usually askin, 'Why can't ah go to nursery any more?' And Big Alec replyin with variations of 'You'll learn more from yer old Da... Honestly? Cause ah need you to keep me out of trouble. Is that okay?' 'It's okay, Dad.' When they'd finally get home, they'd both be so knackered they'd fall asleep on the couch till big bad Mum got home and woke them up sayin, 'Could you not of at least put the dinner on?'

The other great thing they did was just after Halloween, when Big Alec said, 'Wait till you see this...' He'd managed to find an old fashioned toy shop that sold paper caps. 'What are they for, Dad?' Wee Alec said. 'You used to put them into pretend guns and

they'd go bang.' 'Are we getting a gun, Dad?' 'Naw, wait till you see this, it's way better.' They went into the post office and got maskin tape and a big roll of rubber bands. Then took a long walk till they found somewhere really quiet. 'Now watch this,' Big Alec said. He took a roll of caps and made sure it was wrapped up tight. He pulled off a rubber band and bit it in two, shoved one end in with the rolled up caps and left the other danglin. Then he wrapped the lot up with maskin tape.

'It's ready,' he said and pulled out a wee lighter. 'That's naughty, Dad,' Wee Alec said. 'Naw, it'll be fine, stand back.' Big Alec lit the end and the elastic band blackened till it reached the wrapped up caps and went BANG! 'Woah,' they both said and a dog started barkin and howlin nearby. 'Dad?' Wee Alec said. 'Do the bolt,' Big Alec said. And he grabbed Wee Alec under his arm and ran and ran till they were both bent over, hands on knees, wheezin and coughin and laughin.

**“ Christmas Day arrived and Wee Alec had a big box waitin for him ”**

That went well, but was probably not the best of things to repeat, so Big Alec persevered with playin records till they agreed on a few songs. Stuff that Wee Alec could bounce around the house to. Big Alec even agreed to listen to a couple of songs Wee Alec liked. 'Terrible pop drivin,' he'd say, and point out how rotten the lyrics were.

Eventually it was time for Wee Alec to write his letter to Santa. Mum said, 'Santa's got an awful lot of presents to buy this year, so maybe just ask for a wee thing. Is that okay, sweetie?' Wee Alec nodded and said,

'Ah already told Dad it's okay,'



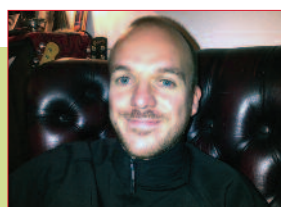
**Big Alec and Wee Alec celebrate Christmas by the Clyde; at Fir Park; and with vinyl dreams**

and went on scribblin.

Christmas Day arrived and Wee Alec had a big box waitin for him. Big Alec dragged them all out of bed ridiculously early. Wee Alec went into the living room squintin at the Christmas tree. Then he investigated the half eaten bit of shortbread and the empty glass that Santa must have gulped in a hurry, cause there was a stain on the carpet next to the snowy bootprints. He opened up the wrappin paper really carefully, and there it was, his first wee record player. 'Woah, it looks great, doesn't it, Dad?' Big Alec ruffled Wee Alec's hair and said, 'Here's a few records to get you started.' 'How did you know?' 'Me and Santa, we're like that,' Big Alec

said. The records were nearly as big as him, but Wee Alec laid them out like tiles on the floor. One of them had a picture of the band he'd seen on the telly that he liked, the *terrible pop band*.

'Aw thanks, Dad! Look Mum! 'Ah see them,' she said. 'In small doses,' Big Alec warned, 'Let's listen to this one instead!' Wee Alec watched as Big Alec pressed a button on the record player and the wee arm magically swung round and put the wee needle down on the record all by itself. 'That's magic, Dad!' Then a song about a *Ghost Town* came on. 'Dad! It's Christmas! This is a Halloween song! But Big Alec had grabbed Mum up and they were laughin, singin and dancing, and Wee Alec said, 'Me too, me too... Wait, how'd you even dance to this song?'



**■ Alastair Kristoffersen was born in Glasgow and brought up in Fort William and Bishopbriggs. He became a train driver in 2009 and works**

**for ScotRail out of Yoker. Alastair took an ASLEF Education creative writing course at Glasgow University's Centre for Open Studies in 2014 and the creative wheels have kept on turning ever since. He lives in Partick with his wife Emma and their children Callum, six, and Sofia, four. 'I'd like to thank Alan Reid for setting up the course, and course tutors Alan McMunnigall and Pamela Ross, without whom I would not be writing now.'**

# Adiós a tres amigos

Three of Stratford's most respected members are taking early retirement in December. Peter Dodgson, Phil Lebrun and Jeff Colpus leave with a wealth of service, experience and knowledge, and will be very much missed, as valued colleagues and friends. Their retirement is a result of the downturn in freight and the well documented issues with DB Schenker.

Before joining the railway, **Peter Dodgson** was a stable lad and did a bit of riding (some might find it hard to believe he wasn't always this heavy!) until his true vocation came calling. Doddo has given 42 years' loyal service to the industry, starting in March 1973 as a guard at Aylesbury before moving to Stratford where he spent the rest of his career in the footplate grade. Doddo is definitely one of those you can describe as an ASLEF stalwart, serving 27 years as branch secretary, and holding positions such as LDC, DFC, district council, AAD delegate and, one year, chairing AAD. Peter was the mainstay of the LDC, serving time with, among others, George Saville, Martin Cargill and Peter Castleton, and cooked up a mean breakfast – I'm sure many readers will remember the smell of breakfast emanating from the LDC room! Outside the railway, he has



**Jeff Colpus**  
'calm and collected as always'

**Doddo (top) displaying, says John Thorpe, 'rare evidence of him actually driving'; Phil Lebrun (above) at Woolwich on the low levels 'when he had hair!'**

worked hard for his CLP, which connects to ASLEF. Doddo has a heart of gold, he's old school (trying his best to adapt to modern technology!) and will be missed by all who had the pleasure of working with him. He's a loving family man and now Jackie, his children and grandchildren, can spend more quality time with him, without the railway taking over.

**Phil Lebrun** started at 16 in August 1974 and spent his entire career at Stratford before the depot moved to Barking to make way for the Olympics. Retirement ends a career spanning 41 years from cleaner to fireman to second man and then driver. Phil served on the social and welfare club as treasurer and then chair for the last 10 years or so. Phil's a lovely, lively character, who always makes you feel welcome.

**Jeff Colpus** started his career as a second man, but left

the railway for a spell in the concrete industry before becoming a bus driver. As privatisation dawned, Stratford LDC managed to secure Jeff's re-employment on the railway as a driver's assistant before he got a driver's job. Redundancy took Jeff to St Pancras for a while, before moving back to Stratford, for EWS. Jeff kept order at meetings, as branch chair, and was co-opted LDC working alongside Barry Moore and Glen Underwood. His son is a driver at Ilford so the railway tradition lives on!

All three are leaving the industry earlier than they intended, and the place won't be the same without them. Good luck Doddo, Phil and Jeff, and thank you for your loyalty to the industry and to the union. We all hope you stay in touch and attend the branch. Best wishes to the three amigos and enjoy a very happy and healthy retirement!  
**John Thorpe,**  
branch reporter

## Upcoming events

### ● WEST BROMPTON – MONDAY 21 DECEMBER

Branch meets from 17.30 at The Bolton (formerly O'Neill's), 326 Earls Court Road, London, SW5 9BQ. Voting on branch officers and h&s rep. All members, past and present, welcome.

### ● ASHFORD – THURSDAY 7 JANUARY

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.0 at Ashford railway club, Beaver Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 7RR.

### ● RAMSGATE – THURSDAY 7 APRIL

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.0 at the Red Arrow Club, Newington Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 0QX.

● Please send your branch news and photographs to [journal@aslef.org.uk](mailto:journal@aslef.org.uk)



**The Grove Park crew (above) and the GS with Paul Francis (right) and Don Warner (below)**

## 50 up for Don

Grove Park had the privilege of welcoming GS Mick Whelan, DO1 Graham Morris and EC1 Marz Colombini to what is now becoming our annual long service awards evening, or beer and badges night! Mick very kindly kicked off the evening with his usual interesting insight into the world of ASLEF and the political environment surrounding the railway and trade unions, with added anecdotes thrown in. Graham updated us on all things District 1 and Marz spoke about the importance of belonging and long service to this great union, the importance of the political fund, and praised Grove Park for



its increase in membership. The main purpose, though, was to hand out service badges to Ian Day and Rob Grigg (10 years); Steve Smith (15); Chris Humm, Peter Scott and Ali Hussein (25); Paul Francis (35); and Don Warner (50). Congratulations to all, and especially Don for his outstanding achievement.

**Ray Garland,** branch secretary

## Don't let it cost you your job!







DO5 Nigel Gibson and EC5 Howard Kaye get round the table with equality adviser Lee James and representative committee members. 'These twice yearly meetings have proved very useful in establishing a common approach to issues in our region,' said Nigel. 'At the latest an informal meet and greet was arranged for our branch equality reps. It's useful for making contacts as well as gaining a greater understanding of the role.'

## Reading beer and badges

Reading played host to a joint beer and badge event to honour long serving drivers from Reading, Oxford, FHH and an ex-Reading driver at Paddington. DO7 Brian Corbett and EC7 Andy Hudd presented awards to Jamie Baker, Chris Souden and Graham Taylor (5 years); Paul Cluer (10); Tony Beckett, Andy Carney, Alan Grainger, Simon Keedle and Paul Willcocks (15); Dean Mattingley and Steve Nicholls (25); Kevin Spencer (30) and Alan Brewer (40).



**Thames Valley united with Brian and Andy (above); Kevin celebrates 30 years (right) and Steve marks 25 (below)**

This was the second year the presentational function was held and the first as a joint event, which proved a great success. **Paul Sedgebeer, branch secretary**



## Fun and laughter at Skipton

It was our pleasure to welcome EC president Tosh McDonald and DO4 Nicky Whitehead to our presentation evening. There was a 50 year medallion for Ronnie Parkinson and long service badges for John Spencer (35); Neil Weeks (20) and Colin Tarrant (10). Norman Egan (15); Martin Williamson and Chris Wright (10) and Keith Owens (5) were unable to attend. It was a very good night, with the usual fun, laughter and debate.

**Adrian Lunn, branch secretary**



**John, Tosh, Ronnie, Neil, Colin and Nicky**

ASLEF Education is working with the Jessops photography academy to make photography courses accessible to ASLEF members. Two local ULRs, Leon Anthony and Nick Meagher, held a level 1 at Strawberry Hill and by the end of the day participants felt more confident with their cameras and had improved their photographic knowledge, skills and techniques. If you're interested please contact your union learning rep who will be happy to help.

And, in conjunction with Jessops, we are running a photography competition. The winner will receive a complimentary Jessops academy course up to the value of £125. We are looking for something with an ASLEF or educational theme. Closing date is 31 December. Please send your entry, with



your name, contact details, and where the picture was taken, to emma.penman@aslef.org.uk subject: photo competition.



**DO5 Nigel Gibson presents Jim Peters with his retirement certificate and one of the famed (and framed) King's Cross drawings.**



## Mick Holder turns back time to Christmas 1915

The Christmas edition of the *Locomotive Journal* has news of deaths at home and overseas, a charitable request, and progress in the labour movement.

### ON A TROOP TRAIN FROM SALOP

The Shrewsbury branch secretary reports: 'Our full member, G Knowles, was on a troop train from Salop to Bristol, when he went to the back of the tender, and was knocked on the head by an overbridge, causing terrible injuries from which our unfortunate brother died the same day. A word to those of our members who run to Bristol: our late brother's widow has now removed back, so men required to book off there, and not at present supporting a widow by their lodging, can assist by enquiring for Mrs Knowles's address at the shed, and giving their support, as she has a severe struggle in front of her, having four children, two being very young. Trusting all who see this will do their bit to assist.'

### ANOTHER GALLANT LIFE

The Great War casts a long shadow: 'Our late Brother A Chatterton, of Tuxford branch, died on 25 September from wounds received on 8 August at Sulva Bay, Gallipoli. Bro Chatterton, who was 20 years of age, was serving with the 9th Sherwood Foresters. Another gallant life surrendered for the nation.' His father SF Chatterton writes: 'Having received the funeral allowance on account of my late son's death, will you and your society accept my thanks for the above? Also for the sympathy you have shown in our bereavement. Wishing your society every success.' John of Newport branch writes: 'I am entirely in agreement with the suggestion re the visiting of our soldier members who return to this country wounded and are miles away from their parents or relatives. Accommodation has been made at Newport to receive 1,000 wounded men.'

### SHERIFF OF THE CITY OF YORK

The editor writes: 'Our congratulations to Councillor CW Shipley JP, who has received the unique honour of being appointed Sheriff of the City of York. Brother Shipley will be the 667th sheriff of that ancient city and, we believe, the first Labour man in the country to hold such a position. If Bro Shipley serves his city as faithfully as he has served our society, he will worthily fill his new position.'



## PHILLIP ALDRIDGE PHILL, PHILLY, PHILLIS, PABLO AND SNIPER

My beloved father Phillip Aldridge sadly passed away, due to heart failure, on 9 September aged 58. He was a proud member of ASLEF, working on the railway for 30 years at Shoeburyness, Essex, for C2C. Phill was born in Wynberg, South Africa, on 15 June 1957. He always joked that he came to England on a banana boat; even though he was only a few months old! He started working on the railway in 1985, the same year he married Julie, with whom he celebrated their pearl wedding anniversary this year. Phill had many hobbies: he was a keen gardener; he enjoyed watching F1; and he enjoyed DIY. His sons always knew him as Mr DIY: Pa to the rescue!

Phill was a good man, cruelly taken too soon from his wife, sons, family and friends. He was a kind man, honest and loving. No one had a bad word to say about Phill. Well, other than: 'Is he ever going to make a bloody cup of tea!' He was known to his friends by many names: Philly, Phillis and Sniper, to name but a few; by his sisters as Knees; while to his sons Ben, Ike and Kyle he was Papa, Pa and Daddy. And, to his loving wife Julie, he was always Pablo. Phill touched the lives of all he met. Even if for the briefest



Phill: an amazing Pablo and Papa

of moments. All of you will have a fond memory of him, and I ask that you remember it now, and keep that image, that conversation, that special moment, in your heart, because he will never be forgotten.  
**Kyle Aldridge, Southend-on-Sea**

## KEN BINSTED RAILWAYMAN TO HIS CORE

Ken Binsted began working at Eastleigh shed in 1954 and passed driving steam traction before moving to Fratton, for a short time, following modernisation. Ken joined us again, and returned to steam in due course, finishing as steam inspector for Eastleigh EWS. A well-liked colleague, and a railwayman to the core, he passed on his skills as an engine man, to me amongst many others new to main line steam. Rob Binsted, his son, is carrying on the family tradition as one of the youngest steam drivers employed by DBS. Ken was taken from us too soon, in his mid-70s, still with much to give. Unfortunately, terminal illness overcame his valiant efforts.

**Brian Denton, Winchester**

## JAMES LONGLEY AN ENTERTAINER

James Longley passed away peacefully on 1 October at the age of 86. Jim served on the railway for more than 40 years, starting on steam engines. His final working years were spent at Caterham, and he was a lifelong member of ASLEF. He was an entertainer, and family man, who loved to sing and see people laugh. He will be greatly missed by Eve, his family and friends. RIP Jim.

**Ken Heydon, Battersea**

## WITH BANNERS HELD HIGH

A DAY-LONG EVENT REMEMBERING THE 1984-85 MINERS' STRIKE

## MUSIC AND THE MINERS' STRIKE

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

## MUSIC, DRAMA

## DEBATES

## POETRY & FILM

**SATURDAY 5 MARCH 2016**

**UNITY WORKS WAKEFIELD**

**11.00AM-11.00PM**

With Banners Held High  
Email [wbhh@talktalk.net](mailto:wbhh@talktalk.net)



## Why is the government trying to stop union health and safety representatives doing their job?

Days lost through  
injuries or illnesses  
caused by work  
**28.2m**

Days lost  
through strike  
action last year  
**0.8m**

Union safety  
reps reduce  
serious injuries by  
**50%**

### The Trade Union Bill will:

- ⚠ Allow the Government to restrict the time off that health and safety representatives in the public sector are entitled to take.
- ⚠ Make it more difficult to take action against employers who risk the health and safety of workers.
- ⚠ Reduce the ability of unions to campaign on health and safety issues.



Find out more about the bill and how to stop it: [www.tuc.org.uk/tubill](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tubill)





## JAN QUATERMAINE A RAILWAY LEGEND

It is with deep sadness that I report the loss of ex-Southport driver Jan Quatermaine who died on 27 October. Jan was one of the railway's true legends, both at work and away from the iron road; he lived for trains and even had several train sets of great value stored in his loft at home. At work Jan would never be spare, and would always do you a favour and, at one time, was my regular swap as he didn't like earlies, basically because he was out and about over night trainspotting all round the country and many a railwayman would see him in sidings and the back cab of an intercity train

heading to London, saving his boxes. He was arrested a couple of times by the BTP for trespassing and they had to ring our depot to get him released!

His knowledge of railway workings was endless and even Keith Foster was amazed at the places he got to and still managed to get back for his shift at Southport. On one occasion it was Saturday afternoon and Jan should have been on duty at 16.00 when the phone rang in the supervisor's office at 15.30 and it was Jan saying he was stuck at Central. The supervisor told him to get the next train to Hall Road and he would get the shed man to take his train there. But Jan replied, 'I'm stuck at Glasgow Central, not Liverpool Central,' and the air went blue! But the job got



Locos like this model Class 47 were driven on Quatermaine's terms

sorted, as it always did, as Jan did many a favour for management and other drivers; he was a railwayman to the core.

I'm sure plenty of other ASLEF members have fond memories of

him so it's with a heavy heart that I say rest in peace, Jan, I hope you're trainspotting in the big blue yonder.

**Bill Baxter, company council, Southport**

## JIMMY BUXTON THE LONE RANGER

James 'Jimmy' Buxton (17 August 1961-13 September 2015) was born into an armed forces family in Kuala Lumpur. His childhood was strict and his formative years spent overseas; he developed a passion for travelling and a dress code to which he adhered throughout his life. His polite demeanour, and smart appearance, turned Jimmy into a very popular figure with his colleagues; blazer buttoned, he wore his Newton Heath branch tie with the pride he showed in the industry he served with such distinction.

His career started in 1979 loading parcel trains at Oldham Clegg Street, progressing in 1980 to a guard's position at Manchester Victoria, where he remained for the rest of his career, becoming a driver in 1990. He was more than a colleague, he was family, and had an individual greeting for each and everyone he knew. A good listener, Jimmy had a jovial side and could make light of difficult situations; he named his cat Tonto, so his family called him the Lone Ranger. Having a passion for motor bikes, cars and tinkering, he was a natural at driving trains. His enjoyment of driving led him to sit on the cab improvement group for Northern Rail. He settled in Oldham, where he met his wife-to-be, Shelly, when visiting relatives. Despite his love of the job, he would holiday whenever he could with Shelly and their kids Steven, Ryan and Kirsty.

With an endearing loyalty to family and colleagues, his character shone through, and whenever he could he would help.

**Victor Korzeniewicz, LDC chair, Newton Heath**

## NORMAN BERWICK FIRST THROUGH THAMESLINK

We say goodbye to another great, larger than life character, retired driver Norman Berwick who has died at 83. He came to Bedford depot from Wellingborough to obtain his driver's position, remaining with us until he retired. He had the distinction of driving the first through Thameslink service from Bedford to Brighton in 1988. A very keen allotment holder, with the obligatory shed, the

contents of which contained a selection items that 'careless' railway staff left lying around to be taken to a place of greater safety. Horology was another of his hobbies, and he was a keen participant in many of the outings arranged by the social and welfare club. To qualify for the football team he became the man with the sponge so we could be assured of his presence at those keenly played inter-depot matches. His wife Olive



pre-deceased him and it was unfortunate that Norman suffered from prostate cancer for several years. He will be sorely missed and our condolences go to his family.  
**Bill Davies, RMS Bedford**

## JOHN SMART STRONG UNION MAN

John Smart has sadly died at the age of 66. He and I started in 1971, within weeks of each other; we both went away driving in 1976 and, later, returned to Eastleigh where we formed a new LDC in 1990 with Reg Brimcombe and Mervin Haines. Those were very busy times, with massive changes in workload, part depot closure, and the splitting of the workforce. In 1994 I continued at LDC for the freight side, and John became LDC for the South West Trains passenger side. John also served at Basingstoke and Bournemouth before returning to the new SWT Northam train crew point at Southampton. Always a strong ASLEF man, John took early retirement eight years ago.

**Brian Denton, Eastleigh LDC secretary 1990-2002**

## REG BRIMCOMBE STRAIGHT INTO C LINK

Reg Brimcombe, who was in his mid-80s, and in good health, has died after a fall at home. Reg was a Devon man, who spent his first 27 years at Newton Abbot. The constant reduction of staff post-Beeching saw Reg at standstill, being in the senior four to go up for driving for some 16 years. Reg moved for a short time to Southampton Docks before transferring to Eastleigh in the early 1970s. Never before had a footplateman at Eastleigh gone from being passed straight into C link! Reg and Margaret established a full life in Hampshire. He served as a town councillor and also ASLEF, latterly as LDC B member. We worked closely with the effects of business sectors at Eastleigh depot. We split in 1994 into SWT and freight, and 22 older drivers, including Reg, took the money for resettlement.

**Brian Denton, Winchester**

We welcome letters, either by email to [journal@aslef.org.uk](mailto:journal@aslef.org.uk) or by Royal Mail to **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN**. The writer of our star letter wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.

## Confusion at Healey Mills

I have been a member of ASLEF for 24 years, the majority of my railway career, joining the footplate in 1991. It is a union I've grown to respect and I appreciate the benefits of being a member. I have always tried to be involved with my branch, if only to give feedback on issues. After various name changes since British Rail I currently work for DB Schenker, natural successors to the previous freight companies of Loadhaul and EWS, etc, based at Healey Mills and Wakefield.

In June DBS announced it was entering a period of change and this meant job losses, reductions, moves, relocation and voluntary redundancy. Whilst many depots went through this distressing process, Healey Mills was a 'separate case' and an 'announcement would be made later' because a major contract (Tarmac) made up a large percentage of the depot's work. For three months we patiently waited. Then, in September, a notice was issued by my local branch stating that the work had been lost and 'most drivers will transfer' to the winning operator under TUPE and this would be offered 'in seniority order'.

In October another communication said DBS was now planning to keep some drivers at the depot, after some drivers had already applied for voluntary redundancy; had they known the depot was largely remaining the thinking could well have been different.

However, the most shocking news was when, in November, we were informed that six drivers would move over under TUPE. Of the two links (rosters) at the depot one had been selected for TUPE based on the amount of the lost contract work in that link.

It would be counted how many times a driver had been at the controls of a locomotive hauling the contractor's trains and the six drivers with the highest figure would transfer. This process of selection gives no accounting for when drivers are on other duties, for example road learning, sickness cover, or route knowledge, nor when they are driving trains for their missing colleagues.

The future of those drivers was decided by how they had been randomly rostered in the previous period. Three of the six selected, with 25 years' service each, have the prospect of moving employer with less favourable pensions and a potential change to working conditions in two years. None of the drivers volunteered for inclusion in the selected link and this process has sold them something none of them want. How did this happen?

**Daniel Stazicker, Healey Mills**

**Simon Weller, ASLEF's national organiser, and lead officer for DBS, says: 'The loss of a**

# JEREMY ISN'T PERFECT BUT HE'S THE MAN FOR THE JOB



Jeremy Corbyn with the ASLEF train crew at the Labour Party conference in Brighton

Jeremy Corbyn was overwhelmingly elected leader of the Labour Party because he has the courage to stand up to the monied and powerful elite of this country, whose views and ideology are so well represented by this Conservative government. He's a radical representative of the people. But what have we now? A socialist opposition leader who

does not have the support of his deputy – a deputy with a formidable political reputation – or Shadow Foreign Secretary on Trident. But then Mr Benn advised members to vote for Andy Burnham in the leadership contest. Since 12 September tens of thousands of people, enthused by Jeremy's election, have joined the Labour Party. The movement, and the

membership, is growing but it's a long time until the general election. A lot of damage can be done to Jeremy by his enemies, whose agenda is not the same as ours, over the next few years. So we must all help to make sure that Jeremy remains leader of the Labour Party. He isn't perfect but he is the man for this job.

**Chris Dodd, retired member**

contract and transfer from one employer to another under TUPE is always going to be difficult in the freight sector. There are some points raised in Daniel's letter that need clarifying. It is not based on seniority – and should never have been described as such – but on time spent performing the primary task (in this case the Tarmac contract). Those who have been recorded as such are considered 'in-scope.' Yes, a lot depends on whether you have restricted route or traction knowledge, or not, and how you were rostered in the previous months. Further difficulties are created by case law in this area (one of the most complex and fought over pieces of employment legislation). Add in that one of the employers may potentially not want to accept the full number, or another may want to transfer more, because they both already have surpluses, and each is prepared to use the law to favour their particular argument, and it is never going to be straightforward. If you refuse to

transfer, you are not redundant; the law determines that you have dismissed yourself. Those who are 'in-scope' and assigned to transfer with the work have guaranteed jobs, those who remain may not. The work at the depot may not sustain the full remaining complement – that is the bald truth of it, I'm afraid. This case law was determined through decades of transfers of service provider, in all manner of industries, as many outside ASLEF are painfully aware.'

## Four day week? No way!

Tube drivers, and other members of LUL staff, are in dispute with TfL over the planned Night Tube. While the feeling is very strong with regards to how the union is fighting this dispute, with the full backing of members, and is receiving tremendous support, I have a slight concern regarding rumours of planned talks in relation to a four day week. While this might sound good to some, to many others it doesn't fit into their thinking when it comes to



the work/life balance which is part of the dispute. In my eyes, a four day week completely goes against a decent work/life balance! If, as some are suggesting, that means an eight hour shift with a 30 minute break, on top of a two and a half hour journey into work, and the same again to get home, and this with everything running smoothly in regards to national rail services, etc, that is, in fact, a 13½ working day for four days! Why does TfL think this would be to our benefit when, for the four days I will be working, I won't gain any benefit at all?

**Barry Gosling, Cambridgeshire**

## Honouring Jack and David

The article 'Jack honoured with new road' (*Journal*, October) brought back memories of Thursday 8 August 1963. I was a 17 year old loco fireman on an Ivatt Class 2 steam locomotive waiting outside Euston station for the mail train to arrive from Glasgow. Little did we know the events that had unfolded further down the line. Part of our roster that day involved taking the empty mail train for turning at North Acton prior to stabling in Willesden carriage sidings. The naming of the new road in Crewe, although long overdue, is a fitting tribute and a proud moment for the family and grandson of Driver Mills. Let us not forget, though, David Whitby, who also suffered in the cab of the English Electric Class 40 that day. The plaque on Crewe station is a fitting tribute to both men.

**Roger Hooper, Yeovil**

## Time to say no to Trident

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader has brought several issues to the fore, including Trident, austerity, and the future of the left. At the moment it is the issue of Trident that jumps out. It is to the eternal shame of the trade union movement that two of our largest trade unions, the GMB and Unite, effectively closed down the debate on Trident at the recent Labour Party conference. I understand their argument that they are defending workers, their members, but they have lost sight of the nature of our organisations. Solidarity with workers doesn't stop in our own workplace, union, or borders; it should be a worldwide concept.

How can a trade union argue in favour of a weapon that is designed not to target combatants, but civilians, workers? Let's be clear: Trident is a weapon of terrorism on a mass scale.

Trade unions do not condone the terrorism we've seen here over the past 50 years and shouldn't condone state-sponsored terrorism, either. I'm sure that, collectively, the unions could come up with a redeployment plan for the skilled workers involved with Trident. As Kate Hudson argued (*Journal*, November) socially useful projects could come to the fore; maybe ships to rescue refugees drowning in the Mediterranean or MRI scanners for our

hospitals. Unions have to protect workers while protecting jobs.

**Steven Nimmo, Edinburgh No2**

## And time to take a pay cut

**I think Jeremy Corbyn is a great conviction politician which we have not had for years. But we have to accept that if we are renationalised our current pay deals will be thrown out the window and we will have to settle for far less in order to boost the wages of those, like nurses, on less than us. We can no longer say 'I'm alright Jack, let's pull up the ladder' True Labour would agree we need to take a pay cut to support those on lower wages than us.**

**Simon Jackson, Tonbridge**

## Where's the money gone?

Can someone please help me understand how a pension fund in credit under BR, and now in private hands, has got a deficit of over £47.3 million, because this is very concerning. Why hasn't ASLEF brought South West Trains to task for not paying what they owe? Every year when pay talks come round SWT say the same thing – they have no profits – and then go and award their MD a huge profit-busting bonus. As a keen supporter of ASLEF why are we not in dispute with SWT? Time again we have had opportunities to work to rule and stop free day working over the past years to make them realise it isn't right.

Can we now get a backbone and stand up to these fat cat TOCs?

**Richard Jones, Bournemouth**

## So who votes Tory, then?

**I read with interest the proposed legislation re picketing, etc. This came as no surprise to me following the recent election result. The Tories always have the advantage, with many Labour supporters too lazy to get out and vote, but who moan about the result later. Too many working-class people cannot see the wood for the trees and vote Tory, and this includes our own members. I know for a fact we have had, and still do have, railwaymen and women who support the Conservatives. Some of these voted for a party hell bent on destroying our terms and conditions and jobs. The Tories have always been against the working-class having a better standard of living!**

**David Rollins, RMS member, Australia**

## On the way to the forum

We would like to thank the RMS committee and fellow members who attended the annual forum at Low Hall, Scalby, near Scarborough. As this was the first time we had attended, we did not know what to expect. Well, we could not have wished for a better weekend! If you are an RMS member and have not attended the forum, then give it a try.

**DJ Turner and RH Jackson, RMS**



**ON LOAN** from British Rail hard enamel badge. Individually numbered, brooch fastening. £6 + £1 p&p from josephduddington@googlemail.com



### OAKS MEMORIAL

commemorative badge honouring 361 miners killed in an explosion at the Oaks colliery near

Barnsley on 12 December 1866. £3 from

remembertheoaks@gmail.com



**LONGSIGHT** badges to mark 125th anniversary. £5 + £1 p&p. Also a bespoke tie at £8 + £1 p&p. Contact Jim

Hopkins on 07810 564804 or

jimmyhopkins@hotmail.com for details.



**BESPOKE CUSHIONS** Hand made 40cm square cushions of railway engines and carriages.

£50. Call Abi on 07954 659849 or email me at adm.uk.me@btinternet.com



**ASLEF-NUM** 30th anniversary of the miners' strike. King's Cross twinned pits. Profits to Justice for Mineworkers. £5 + £1 p&p from richard.sullivan7@ntl.world.com



**ISLE OF WIGHT** 150th rail anniversary commemorative badge. £4.99 inc post and packaging. Contact Fratton driver John

Glazebrook on 07823 881495 for details.



**PROFESSIONAL ENGRAVING** at sensible prices. I can engrave anything you wish, such as the ASLEF logo on the pint tankard. Contact Paul Potts by email at ppotts1969@hotmail.co.uk



**BANBURY** badge, £5 plus p&p, proceeds to Katherine House Hospice for looking after Brother Chris Farmer during his final months. Contact Jim Browne on 07717 847057.



**BLAND ENCOUNTER** by Donald Wightman is a comedy novel about risqué encounters on the railways. A donation from the sale of each book will be made to the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes. Paperback £7.99 ebook £3.95 from www.amazon.co.uk



### COWDEN CRASH

commemorative badges, price £5, to mark the 20th anniversary of the

accident. Contact Mick Green at userg4163@aol.com if you are ex-Norwood train crew.



**CLASS 73/1 JB** 50 year badges for sale. Three variations as shown at £5 each plus £1 p&p. Cheques, payable to Network

South East Railway Society, to 41 Highfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6DD.

To advertise please phone 020 7324 2400 or send an email to journal@aslef.org.uk

# Under the spreading chestnut tree I sold you and you sold me

If you're looking for a present there are lots of books (some of them railway-related) on the bookshop shelves and in the Amazon warehouse this winter. **KEITH RICHMOND** slips between the Christmas covers to see what's in Santa's sack

**E**DWARD WILSON, with a novel about the Vietnam War, *A River in May*, behind him and four first class Cold War thrillers – *The Envoy*, *The Darkling Spy*, *The Midnight Swimmer* and *The Whitehall Mandarin* – now turns his attention in *A Very British Ending* (Arcadia, £14.99) to the way MI5, the British security service, undermined the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in the 1960s and '70s. This is not uncharted territory – Chris Mullins covered it in *A Very British Coup* in 1982, a novel to which Ted, with his title, tips his hat – but with the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader it could hardly be more timely.

‘Books do furnish a room.’ – **Anthony Powell**, *A Dance to the Music of Time*

Wilson has a hinterland. He was born in Baltimore, served with the Green Berets in Vietnam, where he won a Bronze Star, after which he renounced his US citizenship and worked as a labourer at a shipyard in Germany before moving to Britain, where he taught at Lowestoft College and became an active trade unionist, and Anti-Nazi League member, before retiring to become a full-time writer.

Spy novels and political thrillers are ten a penny but very few are as good as *A Very British Ending* which is thoughtful, literate, well-researched and brutally realistic. A chilling read for you, for me, and for Jeremy Corbyn this winter.

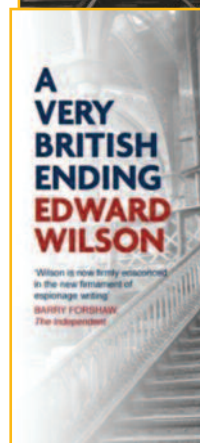
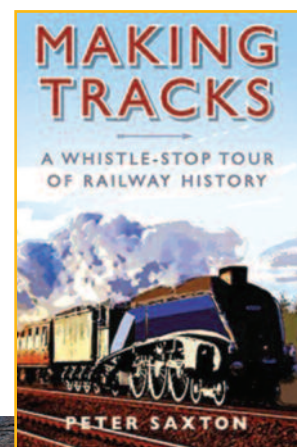
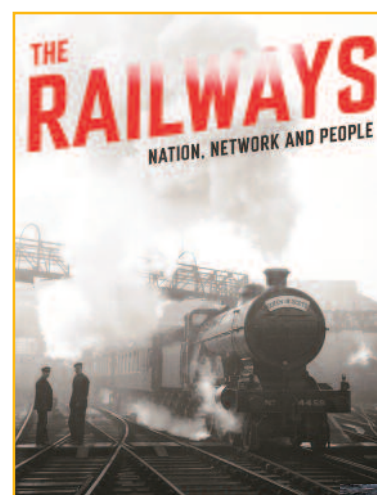
Ted likes to quote a couplet by George Orwell from 1984: ‘Under the spreading chestnut tree / I sold you and you sold me.’ In terms of his sense of people and place – and our often shifting loyalties – he's very, very good. As is CJ Sansom in *Lamentation*

(Macmillan, £8.99) the latest Tudor thriller to feature Shardlake, his hunchback lawyer-cum-detective, and Mathias Enard in *Street of Thieves* (Fitzcarraldo, £12.99) who observes the Arab Spring through the eyes of Lakhdar, a young Moroccan who spends his time in Tangier smoking kif, reading pulp French fiction and ogling girls, especially scantily-clad Western tourists, while offering as convincing an account as I have read of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

Sansom, like Wilson, is on the side of the angels. Earlier this year he said: ‘I find the free market ideology that has dominated the world for the past 30 years, and brought us to our present ruin, a dogma that has failed repeatedly and disastrously, but politics based on national identity is even more dangerous; anti-rational, demagogic, assuming individuals should be defined by their nationality, and, always, against an enemy.’ But you don't have to agree with his politics to admire and enjoy his visceral opening scene in *Lamentation* of a religious heretic being burned at the stake just down the road from ASLEF's head office in Smithfield.

‘Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience. This is the ideal life.’ – **Mark Twain**

*The Railways: Nation, Network and People* by Simon Bradley (Profile, £25) is not just a rich and revealing examination of the place of the permanent way in our affections as well as our national life, but a fascinating slice of social history, too. Bradley, who is joint editor of Pevsner's celebrated architectural guides, is an enthusiast for the golden age of steam and describes busy junctions such as Tamworth and Crewe as destinations for people on an ‘exhilarated pilgrimage.’



On the write lines under the fir tree this Christmas

If the Bradley book is one for the shelf, *Making Tracks: A Whistlestop Tour of Railway History* by Peter Saxton (Michael O'Mara, £12.99) is one for the loo because it's full of facts, anecdotes and railway trivia, served up in bite-size chunks. Though you may stay in the smallest room a little longer than you intended.

The Piers Gaveston Society pig's head story in *Call Me Dave: The Unauthorised Biography of David Cameron* by Michael Ashcroft and Isabel Oakeshott (Biteback, £20) may not have the ring of authenticity, but the tales of Australian spin doctor Lynton Crosby – who likes underlings to call him the Wizard of Oz – describing Cameron as ‘a tosser’ and ‘a posh \*\*\*\*’ do ring true. Crosby was famous for dressing down Dave by sending ‘WTF?’ emails to the Downing Street inbox when the PM went off message. The first time one dropped DC wasn't wearing glasses and – shades of those LOL texts to Rebekah Wade – thought it was from the World Economic Forum.

In *The War Against the Working Class* (Xlibris, £9) Will Podmore,

whose take on global politics is diametrically opposed to that of David Cameron, examines the history of the 20th century in the light of the revolutions in Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

‘So many books, so little time.’ – **Frank Zappa**

Amir Darwish is a Kurd, born in Aleppo, who sought asylum in Britain during the second Gulf War. *Don't Forget the Couscous* (Smokestack Books, £7.95) is his first collection of poems and features wry observations about being a Muslim and living over here. ‘I am’ – ‘I am a chicken tikka masala in a Sunday night takeaway / I am Mohammed to my Parisian friends but Jacques on my CV’ – ends ‘I am a mosque with broken windows / I am a Muslim, I am not a terrorist.’ And the exceedingly dry ‘Sorry!’ – ‘an apology from Muslims to humanity’ for algebra, coffee, the Alhambra Palace... and don't forget the couscous’ – concludes: ‘Please forgive us. / We are sorry and cannot be sorry enough today.’



**CHEESE & HAM TOASTIES**

A modern French version of the classic English tea time favourite of cheese on toast



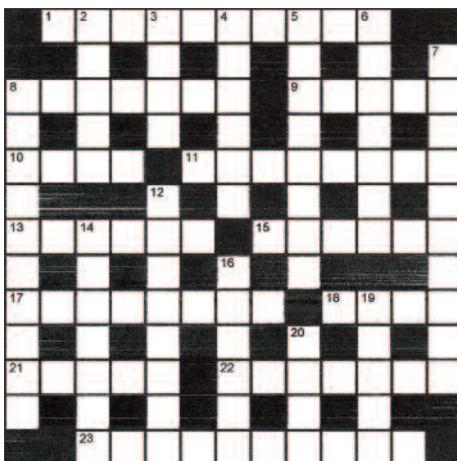
Beat 50g softened butter with 1 finely chopped clove of garlic, 2tbsp freshly chopped parsley and a twist of freshly ground black pepper. Cook 2 medium par-baked baguettes according to instructions (10-12 mins at 200C/Gas 6). Cut in half horizontally, pop in a roasting tin and spread with your garlic butter. Put 100g sliced cooked ham, torn into pieces, and 150g grated Cheddar on top and bake for about 10 mins or until the cheese is bubbling. Then serve garnished with freshly chopped parsley.

**GOOSE ON THE LOOSE**

Goose Island have lost a few friends since they sold up to Anheuser Busch, who make Budweiser – the gassy American version Bud, not the beautiful Budweiser Budvar brewed in České Budějovice – but this IPA, from the Windy City of Chicago, is as good as ever. Fruity, hoppy, complex and very refreshing. £1.75/35.5cl from Sainsbury's and Tesco.

**GAME ON**

Game is free range, lean, and tasty but not always easy to come by. Until now. Abel & Cox have put together a Glorious Game Box (£15 from abelandcole.co.uk) with three cuts of meats, such as pheasant, partridge, venison or rabbit, sourced from woodland in Hampshire, and delivered straight to your door.

**Prize Crossword number 116 by Zebedee****Across**

- 1 Come to a bad conclusion (3, 2, 5)  
 8 Unacceptably different (7)  
 9 Dried coconut (5)  
 10 A fishy part of a shoe (4)  
 11 Feeling sick; offensive (8)  
 13 Horse rider (6)  
 15 Ornamental cave (6)  
 17 Blend, merge (8)  
 18 Studious pupil (4)  
 21 Rye-afflicting fungus (5)  
 22 In a perfect world (7)  
 23 Salvation; conversion into cash (10)

**Down**

- 2 Part of body; type of orange (5)  
 3 Mosque prayer leader (4)  
 4 Venetian painter, his auburn shade (6)  
 5 Pedigree (8)  
 6 Uphold, sustain (7)  
 7 Forsyte creator (10)  
 8 Book cover (4, 6)  
 12 Down in the dumps (8)  
 14 Bad error, especially when dropped (7)  
 16 (Church) division (6)  
 19 I shall obey (radio) (5)  
 20 Written material for study (4)

**Solution to Prize Crossword 115**

**Across:** 1 Spicy 4 Smack 10 Aroma 11 Bloomer 12 Spotless 13 Iota 15 Misfit 17 Goatee 19 Lime 20 Brouhaha 23 Obvious 24 Apron 25 Crypt 26 Regal **Down:** 2 Photo 3 Chaplain 5 Moon 6 Compost 7 Marshmallow 8 Abuse 9 Greasepaint 14 Populate 16 Samovar 18 Gross 21 Aorta 22 Pomp

Congratulations to **Shane Henderson** of **Ramsgate, Kent**, who was last month's winner.



The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 115th ASLEF crossword in the November edition. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 December

**ASLEF'S legal services**

*– your rights for their wrongs!*

**FREE LEGAL ADVICE** ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. In the last year, ASLEF has recovered £6,769,848 in damages for all types of cases.

**EMERGENCIES** If you are an ASLEF member who is arrested or being interviewed by the police and need legal assistance – day or night – you can call the members' emergency hotline on 0800 587 7530.

**SACKINGS OR OTHER PROBLEMS AT WORK** Harassment, discrimination or bullying? If your local, branch or district representative is unavailable, call the industrial relations department at union headquarters (020 7324 2400) or email [info@aslef.org.uk](mailto:info@aslef.org.uk)

**T THOMPSONS**  
SOLICITORS

**Changed your address? Please let us know!**

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Branch.....Membership No.....

Please return coupon to: ASLEF, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN

# Working for railway people (Not for Profit Benefits Organisation)



Run for Transport people by railway people, *Railway Employees & Public Transport Association*  
REPTA helps bring the industry closer together.

## REPTA 2016 MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE NOW!!!

(One whole years membership no longer just calendar year) Join on Line @ [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.co.uk)

- \* Over 125 years' experience
- \* Protected travel
- \* Network support
- \* New for 2016- Phoenix Artists Club London-Fred Olsen Cruises-Haven Holidays
- \* Major discounts from leading high street names
- \* Free Yearbook packed with special deals or look on line @ [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.co.uk)

**Join today for just £4.00** and protect yourself from travel card loss charges, enjoy free insurance save money with wide-ranging members' discounts and benefits from being in a major Transport network.

**Join online at [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.co.uk)** or just send details of your name, address, date of birth and email together with your cheque or postal order made payable to **REPTA**.

For one membership card and yearbook inc. P&P send £5.75. Extra cards for family members £4.00. Family membership two adults and all children up to ages 18 for £10.25 inc P&P.

Please send to: REPTA, 4 Brackmills Close, Forest Town, Mansfield, Notts NG19 0PB. Tel: 01623 646789

**You can also see us on Facebook**

HEALTH  
SAFETY

COMPETENCE  
FAULT MANAGEMENT  
STRESS  
SECURITY  
TIME  
ASSAULT  
SECURITY  
DOUBLE-SHIFTING  
TRAINING  
APATHY  
SKILLS

HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
RAIL AND ROAD  
RISK  
LINESIDE EQUIPMENT  
APATHY

POSSESSION  
MANAGEMENT  
SEATING  
FREIGHT  
BRIEFINGS  
RIDDOR

WORKLOAD  
SKILLS

TRAIN DISPATCH  
LINESIDE EQUIPMENT  
WORKLOAD  
RISK  
SUB-STANDARD  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
TRAIN  
DISPATCH  
EXPERIENCE  
PPE  
ROLLING STOCK MANAGEMENT  
INVESTIGATIONS

LEVEL-CROSSING  
DECISION  
DRIVING  
COMMUNICATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CAB-DESIGN  
MAINTENANCE  
UNDER  
REPORTING  
SIGNALLING

# 0800 4 101 101

...alternative reporting for your health and safety concerns.

Freepost CIRAS  
Text 07507 285887  
[www.ciras.org.uk](http://www.ciras.org.uk)

**CIRAS**  
Confidential Reporting for Safety